

Introduction

King County Comprehensive Plan 2004

A. About King County

King County has some of the most beautiful scenery in the country, some of the most productive farmlands, and one of the most vibrant economies. The King County Comprehensive Plan ~~((2000))~~ 2004 establishes a vision that preserves this incredible diversity while continuing to acknowledge that citizens want options as to where they live, work and play. The plan guides growth and development throughout the unincorporated areas of the county and establishes King County's position on major issues such as annexations, regional water supply and environmental protection.

King County Geography

King County, covering 2,130 square miles, is the size of the state of Delaware, but much more geographically diverse. It extends from Puget Sound in the west to 8,000-foot Mt. Daniel at the Cascade crest to the east. King County's various landforms include saltwater coastline, river floodplains, plateaus, slopes and mountains, punctuated with lakes and salmon streams. Lake Washington, covering 35 square miles, and Lake Sammamish with 8 square miles are the two largest bodies of fresh water. Vashon-Maury Island in Puget Sound and Mercer Island in Lake Washington provide different island environments.

The north-south trending shapes of the lakes and hills make east-west travel more difficult than north-south travel. Four major river basins with salmon-bearing streams are separated by step-sided plateaus whose slopes are subject to landslides and erosion.

King County Jurisdictions

As of ~~((2000))~~2004, there are 39 cities ranging in size from Seattle with ~~((541,000))~~ 572,000 people to Skykomish and Beaux Arts with less than ~~((300))~~350 each. Since December 1994, five new cities have incorporated, shifting 120,000 people into city limits. King County's 39 cities cover ~~((376))~~383 square miles, or 18% of the county's total land area. The incorporated population has increased by a total of ~~((249,000))~~ 327,000 since 1994, primarily due to new cities and large annexations as well as growth within existing boundaries.

Unincorporated King County, the territory outside any city, now has about ~~((360,000))~~352,000 people or ~~((24%))~~20% of the county's population, on 82% of its land area. The unincorporated population has decreased by ~~((138,000))~~148,000 since the 1994 Comprehensive Plan was initially adopted, chiefly through the incorporation of new cities.

King County Demographics

In 2000, with more than ~~((1,685,000))~~ 1,779,000 people, King County is the largest county in Washington State and the 13th largest in the nation. As a populous large county with a major central city, King County constitutes the majority of the "Seattle-Bellevue-Everett" metropolitan area of nearly ~~((2.4))~~ 2.5 million persons. King County exhibits growing diversity: ~~((80%))~~ 73% of the population is non-Hispanic white, ~~((40%))~~ 11% Asian or Pacific Islander, 5% African-American, 1% Native American and ~~((4%))~~ 5.5% Latino (~~((1998 estimate))~~ 2000 census).

King County's population has grown by 11% since ~~((1990))~~ 1994, a modest rate compared with Sunbelt metro areas and nearby Puget Sound counties. However, given the large population already here, the growth numbers are significant. The population increase since ~~((1990))~~ 1994 equals the total existing population of the cities of Bellevue and ~~((Federal Way))~~ Renton. King County is forecasted to grow by an additional ~~((190,000))~~ 270,000 persons (~~((11%))~~ (15%) to about ~~((1,875,000))~~ 2,049,000 by ~~((2012))~~ 2022.

The number of housing units in King County is growing ~~((faster than))~~ at about the same rate as its population. Now estimated at ~~((739,000))~~ 775,000 houses, apartment and condominium units and mobile homes, housing has increased by ~~((92,000))~~ 83,000 units (~~((14%))~~ (12%) since ~~((1990))~~ 1994. Household size has stabilized after declining in the 1970s and 1980s, and is now estimated at ~~((2.37))~~ 2.39 persons per household. ~~((Further))~~ A slight decline in household size ~~((are))~~ is anticipated in coming years, to about ~~((2.2))~~ 2.30 in ~~((2012))~~ 2022.

King County Economy

More than 1.1 million workers are employed within the borders of King County, at nearly ~~((65,000))~~ 84,000 business establishments. With more than 40% of Washington state's jobs and payroll, the county is truly the economic engine of Washington and the Pacific Northwest. With a ~~((1998))~~ 2002 payroll exceeding ~~((44))~~ \$52 billion, the King County economy is larger than that of several U.S. states.

~~((The number of jobs has grown about 24% faster than population and housing. Manufacturing employment has remained strong despite the ups and downs of aerospace, the largest sector. The composition of the economy is shifting from the traditional manufacturing and resources bases to high tech, services and trade, both local and international. Unemployment has been at historic lows near 3% for several years.))~~ King County has a cyclical economy, with booms and recessions typically on a ten-year cycle. During the 1990s, the number of jobs grew by 26% to almost 1.2 million, then edged downward after 2001. Manufacturing employment remains important, but aerospace, the largest sector, has lost 12,000 jobs since 2001. The economy has diversified from the traditional aerospace and resource bases to high tech, services and trade, both local and international. Unemployment has recently increased after several years of historic lows. However, long-term prospects are favorable for a return to healthy economic growth and further increases in jobs.

B. Planning in King County

King County's comprehensive land use planning dates back to 1964. Its first comprehensive plan under the State Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted in 1994. The GMA, passed by the Washington State Legislature in 1990, seeks to further protect the quality of life in the Pacific Northwest. The GMA directs the state's most populous and fastest growing counties and their cities to prepare comprehensive land use plans that anticipate growth for a 20-year horizon. Comprehensive plans adopted in accordance with GMA must manage growth so that development is directed to designated urban areas and away from rural areas. The GMA also requires jurisdictions to designate and protect critical areas and commercially significant forestry, agriculture, and mining areas. The GMA requires each comprehensive plan to adhere to a set of thirteen goals and to include the following elements: land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities,

rural, and transportation. The King County Comprehensive Plan 2000 represent((s))ed the first major review and ((incorporates)) the first set of substantive changes since the county's current comprehensive plan was initially adopted in 1994. The 2004 update is the second major review. The 2004 update also satisfies a state requirement that the county's urban growth area be reviewed every ten years.

The King Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) set the framework for the county's and cities' comprehensive plans. The CPPs, adopted by the county and cities in 1992, establish an Urban Growth Area (UGA) within the western one-third of King County where most growth and development is targeted. The goals of the policies include: reducing urban sprawl, protecting rural areas, providing affordable housing throughout the county and coordinating protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

C. Summary of the King County Comprehensive Plan

How the Plan is Used

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides a legal framework for making decisions about land use in unincorporated King County. Public and private agencies, property owners, developers, community groups and King County staff use the comprehensive plan in several ways.

First, the plan is the framework for other plans and regulations such as subarea plans and the King County Code that govern the location and density of land uses. It provides guidance to county officials for decisions on proposals such as zoning changes and developments. It also gives the public direction on the county's position on proposed changes in land use or zoning, environmental regulations, or broader policy issues. The plan also provides a basis for decisions about public spending on facilities and services. And, the plan presents other agencies, such as cities and special purpose districts, with King County's position on large-scale matters such as annexation, use of resource lands, environmental protection and others.

The GMA allows local comprehensive plan amendments to be considered once each year. In King County, those annual amendments allow technical changes only, except for once every four years. Then, during the "Four-Year Cycle review process," substantive changes to policies, land use designations and the Urban Growth Area boundary can be proposed and adopted.

Following is a summary, by chapter, of the plan:

Chapter One: Regional Planning

The vision and goals of this plan are based on the 13 planning goals specified in the Washington State Growth Management Act, the Countywide Planning Policies and the values voiced by the citizens of King County. The official King County Land Use is included in this chapter. This chapter also describes the county's process for amending the Comprehensive Plan and outlines and distinguishes the annual cycle and the four-year-cycle amendments.

Chapter Two: Urban Communities

The Urban Communities chapter brings together several of the major elements necessary to make a community whole: housing, business centers, economic development and human services. By merging these elements into one chapter, King County emphasizes the importance each plays as a part of a livable community. A major tenet of the GMA is to target growth in the urban areas, so the policies in this chapter better facilitate urban development where infrastructure and facilities exist or can be readily provided.

Chapter Three: Rural Legacy

Protecting a rural way-of-life in King County is a major thrust of the plan. Conserving King County's rural and natural resource lands integral to providing diversity in lifestyle choices, continuing farming and forestry economies, protecting environmental quality and wildlife habitat, and maintaining a link to King County's resource-based heritage.

Chapter Four: Environment

With Chinook salmon and Puget Sound and Coastal Bull trout now listed as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, and other species about to join the list, protecting the environment is a priority. King County's programs for protecting the environment are some of the most advanced in the country. Protecting and restoring air quality, water resources, soils, and plant, fish and animal habitats are among King County's primary goals. This chapter establishes policies to protect the environment and enhance the region's high quality of life.

Chapter Five: Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources

Protecting and enhancing King County's communities through public funding while encouraging continued stewardship for county parks, open spaces, recreation, and cultural resources is the central focus of Chapter Five.

Chapter Six: Transportation

King County will continue to promote a transportation system that provides residents with a range of transportation choices that respond to both community needs and environmental concerns.

Chapter Seven: Service, Facilities and Utilities

The Growth Management Act requires coordinated planning so that the services required by new residents and their homes and businesses are available as growth occurs. Needed services include many that are not provided by King County, such as water supply, local sanitary sewers, fire protection, schools, energy facilities, and telecommunications. King County does provide services such as regional wastewater treatment, regional solid waste management, and local stormwater management. This chapter guides service provision.

Chapter Eight: Community Planning

King County's community plans (except for the Vashon Town Plan, West Hill, and White Center) are no longer in effect as separately adopted plans. In many cases, however, the plans contain valuable historical information about King County's communities and often provide background for the land uses in effect today. Policies from the community plans were retained as part of the comprehensive plan to recognize the unique characteristics of each community.

Chapter Nine: Implementation

The comprehensive plan policies, development regulations and countywide planning policy framework have been adopted to achieve the growth management objectives. This chapter explains the relationship between planning and zoning.

D. Technical Appendices

Integral to the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan are the detailed inventories, forecasts, finance plans and Urban Growth Area analysis required by the Growth Management Act. ~~((Three))~~Four technical appendices (Volume 1) are adopted ~~((by reference))~~ as part of the plan to implement these Growth Management Act requirements (RCW 36.70A.070, 36.70A.110),

36.70A130). These appendices were updated in 2004. Beginning with 2004, Technical Appendix D was moved to Volume 1.

Volume 1

Technical Appendix A. Facilities and Services *
Technical Appendix B. Housing
Technical Appendix C. Transportation *
Technical Appendix D. Growth Targets and the Urban Growth Area 2004

~~((* These appendices were amended in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan Update.~~

Additional important information also supports the plan vision and goals. Nine technical appendices (Volume II) ~~((have been))~~ were prepared to provide supporting documentation to the 1994 plan:

Volume 2

Technical Appendix D. Growth Targets and the Urban Growth Area
Technical Appendix E. Washington State Laws
Technical Appendix F. History of Planning in King County
Technical Appendix G. Economic Development
Technical Appendix H. Natural Resource Lands
Technical Appendix I. Natural Environment
Technical Appendix J. Potential Annexation Areas
Technical Appendix K. King County Functional and Community Plans
Technical Appendix L. Public Involvement Summary

Information that supported amendments subsequent to 1994 are included as follows:

Volume 3

Technical Appendix M. Public Participation Summary 2000 *

~~((* Volume 3 was added as part of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan Update to include information on the public involvement in the development of the 2000 Update.))~~

Volume 4

Technical Appendix N. Public Participation Summary 2004

E. The Regulations

The King County Comprehensive Plan is implemented through the adopted regulations. These include the King County Zoning Code and other code titles such as Water and Sewer Systems, Roads and Bridges, and Land Segregation. All development proposals in King County must meet the requirements of the code.

F. For More Information

Copies of the plan are available in all King County libraries. Please visit the website of the King County ~~((Office of Regional Policy and Planning))~~ Department of Development and Environmental Services at <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/complan> for current information on planning in King County and to view electronic versions of the plan and related documents.

As required by the GMA, King County maintains a docket for recording comments on the King County Comprehensive Plan and associated development regulations. Comments logged on the docket are reviewed by the county and made available for review by the public. The docket is available on the King County Website at <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/compplan>.